

6. **LRB 433** – Notice of Review Against Refusal of Full Planning Permission for Replacement Windows and Door at 5 Old Hall Buildings, Charlestown Road, Aboyne, AB34 5EJ – Reference: APP/2018/1316.
 - (ii) Supporting Documents as submitted by the Planning Service (note Decision Notice is included in applicant’s Notice of Review).

REPORT OF HANDLING

Application Reference: APP/2018/1316

Proposal: Installation of Replacement Windows and Door

Address: 5 Old Hall Buildings, Charlestown Road, Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, AB34 5EJ

1. Description of proposal

The proposal seeks permission to replace all of the first floor windows and a rear ground floor door on a first floor flatted property (no 5) within the Old Hall Buildings, which is a large collection of former public buildings, located on Charlestown Road, Aboyne. The site is within the Aboyne Conservation Area. The buildings in which the flats are contained are three storey, of vernacular granite appearance and contain a number of flats which front Aboyne Green.

The windows on the western public elevation of the buildings can be classified as falling into two categories. The northern part of the building (to the north of the flat) features traditional style sash and case windows. The southern and larger portion of the building, in which this flat is located, features split timber glazing of a more modern appearance, with both the ground and first floors featuring larger timber framed windows, with timber boards in the lower portion of the windows and single glazed elements in the upper portion. The windows are painted white.

Windows to the rear (east elevation) are of a similar design, albeit smaller in size. The door and single window on the north elevation of the rear projection, forming the stairs, are similar in design to the rest of the windows, and are also of timber construction.

The applicant wishes to replace their windows and door with windows of the same design and proportions, but manufactured in white upvc. Some of the windows will have a slight change in the opening mechanisms, but this would not affect visual appearance.

2. Relevant Planning History

None

3. Supporting Information

The applicant has provided a supporting statement stating that they feel the change of material will have no negative impact on the Conservation Area, particularly in that there are numerous examples of upvc on frontages throughout the Conservation Area.

4. Variations & Amendments

None

5. Representations

No valid representations have been received.

6. Consultations

Infrastructure services (Environment Team) have commented that the use of upvc on such a prominent elevation would not be acceptable in a Conservation Area. Ideally the windows should replicate the sash and case proportions of the windows on the northern wing of the building.

7. Relevant Policies

Scottish Planning Policy

The aim of the Scottish Planning Policies is to ensure that development and changes in land use occur in suitable locations and are sustainable. The planning system must also provide protection from inappropriate development. Its primary objectives are:

- to set the land use framework for promoting sustainable economic development;
- to encourage and support regeneration; and
- to maintain and enhance the quality of the natural heritage and built environment.

Development and conservation are not mutually exclusive objectives; the aim is to resolve conflicts between the objectives set out above and to manage change. Planning policies and decisions should not prevent or inhibit development unless there are sound reasons for doing so. The planning system guides the future development and use of land in cities, towns and rural areas in the long term public interest. The goal is a prosperous and socially just Scotland with a strong economy, homes, jobs and a good living environment for everyone.

Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2014

The purpose of this Plan is to set a clear direction for the future development of the North East. It promotes a spatial strategy. All parts of the Strategic Development Plan area will fall within either a strategic growth area or a local growth and diversification area. Some areas are also identified as regeneration priority areas. There are also general objectives identified. In summary, these cover promoting economic growth, promoting sustainable economic development which will reduce carbon dioxide production, adapt to the effects of climate change and limit the amount of non-renewable resources used, encouraging population growth, maintaining and improving the region's built, natural and cultural assets, promoting sustainable communities and improving accessibility in developments.

HE2: Protecting historic and cultural areas

8. Other Material Considerations

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the proposed development is not considered to give rise to any differential impacts on those with protected characteristics.

9. Implications and Risk

Not applicable

10. Directions by Scottish Ministers

None

11. Discussion

The proposal seeks replacement of the windows and a door on a property in the Aboyne Conservation Area, and therefore the key consideration is whether the design of the replacement windows and door would preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area, in accordance with the requirements of policy HE2: Protecting historic and cultural areas. HE2 also requires the design, layout, siting and materials used in development to be of the highest quality and respect the individual characteristics for which the Conservation Area was designated.

Dealing with the replacement windows first, the windows are a direct design replacement for the existing timber windows which, although not of a traditional appearance, are consistent with the overall window design in the southern part of the building. Enhancements could be made to bring uniformity in window design to replace the non-traditional windows with sash and case windows, but as the actual style is to match, this is not detrimental to the Conservation Area in this regard. However, the new windows are to be provided in upvc rather than timber.

Policy HE2 requires proposals, and the materials utilised in them, to be appropriate to the Conservation Area. Where possible proposals should provide enhancement to the character of the Conservation Area. Aboyne Conservation Area is focused on Aboyne Green and the predominantly Victorian granite buildings which surround it.

In this context, ideally the windows on the west facing frontage of the building overlooking the green would be of a traditional sash and case appearance, similar to those found on the northern part of the building. The change of these windows would mean that the first storey design and ground floor would be different in appearance, but would allow for the whole building to be returned to a more traditional fenestration in time.

The applicant has considered providing windows with a traditional appearance, however the lower part of the existing windows (which externally is a solid timber panel) hides an internal wall which would need to be removed in order for an original style of window to be refitted. This renders the change in window style unfeasible, and the Planning Service accept that.

However, the applicant has been asked to consider a timber window as a direct replacement for the existing timber windows and door. The applicant has raised cost as the key issue and asked for the application to be determined as submitted.

In respect of the applicant's justification, it is the Planning Service's experience that the cost of any windows varies considerably depending on the supplier, and generally it would not be reasonable to consider cost as a factor alone. No evidence has been provided to give this issue any material weight. The Council's Environment Team have, in the past, taken a paper to all Area Committees on the cost and energy efficiency comparisons between timber and PVC windows, proving that there is very little difference between the two. The applicant's supporting statement highlights that there are numerous upvc windows in the area. Many of these predate the Conservation Area, and the planning policy position maintained by the current local development plan seeks to enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area. One of the key ways this can be achieved is the reinstatement of traditional design features. Enhancement would be ideal, replacing what's currently there is acceptable, but allowing a sub-standard feature, whether it's a design detail or the material, is wholly inappropriate and unacceptable.

In this case the building is of vernacular merit, its western elevation is prominent within the Conservation Area, and the building would benefit from a change to the windows appearance. Whilst it would be unreasonable to expect the applicant to do the level of work required to implement full sash and case windows, a change to upvc, particularly on the western elevation of the building would be detrimental to the building and the character of the Conservation Area. The windows and door to the rear (east and north) are not particularly prominent from the public realm, and there would be less impact from the change to upvc on this elevation. Nonetheless, timber would be preferable to the proposed upvc as this is both the current and historic material used in this building, and in that timber is a traditional and more sustainable solution than upvc.

In conclusion, the application is contrary to Policy HE2: Protecting historic and cultural areas of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017, in that it would represent a significant reduction in the quality of the Conservation Area by way of use of inappropriate materials.

The application was subject to local member notification. Two of the three ward members agreed with the recommendation. The third did not respond. As such the application was determined by the appointed officer under delegated powers.

12. Recommendation

REFUSE for the following reasons:

01. The replacement of existing timber windows and door, on a prominent vernacular building, with upvc windows and door is considered to be detrimental to the character of the conservation area and therefore the application is considered to be contrary to HE2: Protecting historic and cultural areas of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

13. Process of Determination

The application was the subject of consultation with Local Members under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

14. Planning Obligations

No

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT / ENVIRONMENT SURGERY - MARR

DATE	DM OFFICER	APPLICATION REFERENCE	ADDRESS	ISSUE	ACTION	ENV. OFFICER
19.07.18	JWh	APP/2018/1316	5 Old Hall Buildings Charlestown Road, Aboyne	Installation of Replacement Windows and Door	Having reviewed the application, as the property is situated within the Aboyne Conservation Area the relevant policy is; <i>ALDP 2017 Policy HE2 Protecting historic and cultural areas</i> We will not allow development, including change of use or demolition that would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. This applies both to developments within the conservation area and proposals outwith that would affect its setting. The design, scale, layout, siting and materials used in development within a conservation area must be of the highest quality and respect the individual characteristics for which the conservation area was designated. The purpose of the policy is to either preserve or enhance the conservation area and to ensure that the design and materials are appropriate to the building and location. It is noted that the property currently has a more modern window pattern than would have been the original design, which has arguably had a negative impact on the building and the streetscape. The ideal solution would be that all the windows on the premises be returned to a more traditional design, some configuration of timber sash and case being the most	CR

